

FORESHADOWS - One of Those Days

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Category: Star Wars
Genre: Drama
Language: English
Status: In-Progress
Published: 2000-05-26 09:00:00
Updated: 2000-05-26 09:00:00
Packaged: 2016-04-27 18:36:47
Rating: T
Chapters: 1
Words: 5,125
Publisher: www.fanfiction.net
Summary: ... prologue to an XWing based work

FORESHADOWS - One of Those Days

HALO SQUADRON - EPISODE I

> FORESHADOWS - by Jough Donakowski

>
Prolouge - One of Those Days

>
 The white moon silently rode across the night sky over the swamp world of Kiminnyr

>III, it's faint light playing upon the surface of the world, hugging it like a mother and her
child.

> The small rebel outpost was tucked away in a grove of trees, concealed from view by
the maze of over hanging vines. Mist rose up from the damp ground below and the

>moonlite reflected shone through it like ghosts engaged in a celtic dance. For the time
being, only a few computer terminals that flickered on and off in the far corner of the

>complex showed any signs of life.
> Bryant rolled over in his bed on the top bunk and hugged his pillow close to his head
as he lay happily in sleep. Small droplets of sweat and dew mingled together at the top of

>his nose. Though it was a warm, moist swamp world, he still opted to sleep in his blue
correllian flight suit, like he always had before. Old habits are hard to break, and tonight,

>it was a good thing he chose not to.
 Below him, in the bottom bunk, was Trent, lying on his back, decked out in a plain

>white shirt and a loose pair of combat shorts. His Merr-Sonn heavy blaster was tucked
away under his pillow, where he always kept it. Good thing that was tonight, too.

> Over in the corner of the small, unlit room were their two astromech droids, R3-D4
with his blue and gold trim and RA-D5, covered from head to toe in red, both droids in

>'sleep' mode.

> The rebel outpost was small and X shaped, a central control area in the middle that
branched off into 4 smaller areas, supplies and storage, data-processing, a small

>cargodocking bay, and living quarters. It's functional purpose was to collect encrypted
>intelligence reports from the BSN and recoding them, then pysicslly delivering them
manually to rebel officers. It was a monotonous dull job, but it had to be done, and it was
>the job of this outpost to see to it that it was done well. Manned by 32 bothans, several
human crypters, crackers, cyphers and various other computer junkies, and by Bryant and
>Trent, who the two resident human pilots, cooks, janitors, entertainment, etc, etc, etc...
 The base was a little run down, minimally funded, an overall wreck, but to them, it
>was home.

> It was a little past midnight when the first alarm bell sounded.

> Outside, a long, ominous diamond shaped shadow crept across the white blue surface
of the moon, momentarily cloaking the base in an eerie darkness. A Bothan sentry in
>the base awoke just in time to get the small station's defence shielding up before the first
bolts of turbo laser fire came hurtling down, but the shileds wouldn't hold long.
> Gleeming red light cut through the darkness of the hallways as a high pitched
screaching peirced the ears of all. Bryant awoke with a start and hit his head against the
>cieling, muttering some profanity in an obscure, archaic language as he did so. Trent was
a little less startled as he slowly rolled out of his makeshift bed and rubbed the sleep
>away from his eyes.
 Bryant jumped down from his bunk to the cold steel floor in his blue flight suit and
>looked about psudeo-franticly. Trent was a little more casual, standing and stretching
before taking the opporitunity to look up at Bryant.
> "Hey man..... what's going on here?" he asked, hands behind his head as he arched his
back to the point of cracking. Bryant slowly pulled some socks on from off of the floor
>and sat down in a chair covered in old clothing before he replied.
 "I dunno... that's the assault alarm though." he said as he slipped the socks over his
>blistered feet. "Probably a drill."
 "Ooooo.. a drill..." a pause. "We're supposed to treat those as the real thing, right?" He

>asked eagerly, grabbing a baggy green shirt off of the corner of his bed and throwing it
over his head. Bryant looked up and shrugged as he tugged his other sock on.
> "Well yeah. I guess." There was less then excitement in his vioce.
 "Excellent." Trent spoke as he reached under his pillow and pulled out a Merr-Sonn
>59-mark II heavy blaster and strapped it to his side. Bryant smiled slightly as he got to his
feet and kicked his mettalic blue droid to life. It garbled something in binary at him,
>something derogatory mind you, and then it fluttered to life. Soon, Trent's droid was wide
awake as well.
> A sudden jolt nearly knocked the humans to the ground, and caused another binary
uproar from the duality of the droids. Soon, a thin cloud of dark smoke slipped into the
>room from under the heavy doorway like water overflowing from a bath tub.. Bryant and
Trent looked to each other, their faces sharing the same expression, and then in one
>simulataneous motion, they dashed towards the door.
 "Arthree, get to the hanger and prep my fighter!" Bryant called while taking off down

>the corridor, "Array, get yourself to a scomp link and download every encrypted file you
can find, plans, schems, recipies for bithday cakes, everything!" Trent was nearly to the
>end of the smoke-filled hallway by the time the two driods got out of the room and
wheeled themselves after him, Array dragging a shirt behind him.
>
 Another explosion rocked the hallway.
>
* * *
>
 The torrent of green turbolaser fire continued to rain down on the planet. Acres of
>lush forest were cleared in a cloud of red and black, razed beyond recognition. The scent
of mercy was not in the air. The defence shielding around the base began to falter, and
>that was when thee the turbolasers died out and the ion cannons kicked in. Moments
later, the dying shield sputtered out of existance completely, leaving the base open to
>attack.
 "Cease fire." stated Captain Jender as he paced across the bridge. The ion cannons
>ceased fire. "Ground Ops, prepare transports." he said. The transports were prepared.
"Weapons, clear the area of any vegetation and posible defences." Blazing green
>devistation was poured out around the lands surrounding the base. For several seconds
there was a calm, cool silence as the Captain stood at the edge of the bridge and stared
>out at the ripe planet below. He looked around at his officers for a moment before a
wicked smile crept its way across his face and his eyes narrowed. "Land the troops." was
>all he said.
>* * *

> "What in the name of the gods is going on!?! " yelled Trent as he ran into the control
room where several Bothans were frantically bussling about.
> "...under imperial attack..." some one muttered amidst the confusion. Bryant came
dashing in seconds later and asked the same question.
> "Under imperial attack...." Trent answered. Bryant quickly hopped a chair and sat
down in a grey leather chair at one of the computer terminals, punched a few keys and
>brought up a display of the air space over head. His jaw dropped as he gazed over the
green and black wire frame display. Two Victory-II Star Destroyers were slowing
>descennding into an orbit over the planet, and an Imperial class destroyer was already
launching a strike team. Trent gazed over Bryants sholder.
> "This is bad, isn't it?" he asked. Bryant nodded with a 'yes, this is bad' look on his still
sleep ridden face. Victory-II's weren't exactly run of the mill patrol crafts. They were Star
>Destroyers of the planet sieging genra. It was apparent they knew the rebels were there,
and had probably known for a long time. This stunk of a double agent. Now wasn't the
>time for any of those concerns, though.
 "Very." Bryant finally managed to answer Trent as he jumped up from his seat and
>grabbed a blaster rifle that was laying out on a desk atop a pile of papers. Trent followed
close behind and grasped his heavy blaster pistol in his hand, stroking it lovingly like he
>would a beautiful women.
 "To the ships?" he asked with a feigned regal Correllian accent.
> "To the ships!" Bryant replied, echoing Trent's acting. They could never be serious.
Well, almost never.
> The two filed out of the room as the blaring red lights and

screaming alarms raged on.
"You guys," Bryant said before running out the door, "finish up here and get the hell out, >you hear?" No response. Bryant tried again. "They've got landing parties coming down,
and we can assume they're planning on capture and slow, painful torture. Allright? And I >very highly doubt any of you have a slow, painful torture fetish..." The furry Bothans still
ran about, either not hearing a word he said, or not caring. Bryant fired a shot into the >ceiling fixtures that got their attention. "Get out of here!" he yelled before running after
Trent. They looked up at him, but they still didn't listen. Stubborn Bothan's weren't a new >invention, though.
As he rounded a corner a hand grabbed him and pulled him off to the side. Bryant >raised his rifle and wrapped his finger around the trigger before he looked up to see Trent
pulling him out of the main hallway, looking as sullen as ever. > "Imps..." Trent corsely whispered, psudeo-sensuosly, and motionined down the hall
with his head. Bryant stopped and peered through the smokey hallway. Six white adorned >storm troopers had taken position halfway down and were conversing, blasters
half-ready. Trent smiled as he smoothly dropped the energy cell from his blaster and >replaced it with a new one that was hanging from around his belt. Bryant just smiled back
as he set his rifles power to 95% and adjusted the nozel a smidgen. The two looked at >each other for a moment, nodded in agreeence, laughed a little, to themselves, and then
confidently sturt out into the hall confidently. > As they somberly processed down the hall, unnoitced by the stormies, Trent reached
over and picked up a large chunk of wall, then proceeded to throw it full force at one of >them, hitting him squarly in the side of the head and nearly sending him toppling over.
The other five troopes looked over and three of them were greeted with bright red laser >fire to the chest courtesy of Bryant's millitary issued, civilian modified repeating blaster
rifle. The remaining two standing shock troops instinctivly took cover behind scattered >bits of debris as the third trooper tried to regain his orientation. Trent sent a shot into the
scrambling troopers neck as Bryant crouched and took aim at one of the other troopers >forehead.
Unshaken by several blaster shots taken in his direction, Trent continued to walk >calmy down the smokey corridor, taking several controlled shots of his own in the
direction of one of the concealed imperial warriors. A stray shot caught him in the >sholder, sending him reeling into another shot, sending him into the side of the hall and
making him crumble to the groud in a nice little heap. > Bryant pulled the trigger and sent a shot through his targets head, causing his white
helmet to be stained black. The final trooper was delt with in a similar fashion. > As soon as that was dealt with, the two rebels reached the end of the corridor and
turned off down the direction of the hangar. When they entered the small fighter bay, >their two droids were waiting patiantly besides Bryant and Trent's X-Wings. How they got
there faster then a humans was a mystery, but then again, they were far from your typical, >every day, run of the mill driods. On the contrary, they seemed to be waiting almost
impatiantly, as if the two had stood them up on a double date.

> "Bryant..." Trent called, tossing him his gun. Bryant turned and caught it gracefully in
midflight. Trent then jogged over to a panel on the side wall and punched several keys,
>before the large hangar doors opened, revealing the blacky-redness of the blazing
grasses in the night. Bryant had run over and placed Arthree on top of a stabilizer foil,
>pulled himself up to the droid and set the droid atop his fighter, allowing it to get itself in
place behind the cock-pit. He tossed Trent's blaster down to him as he stood balanced on
>the fuselage like a bird perched upon a citadel.
 "Does your droid have everything!?! " he shouted over the comotion of the invasion
>torn base.
 "I think so." Trent yelled back, not knowing if it was true or not. Quickly he rushed
>over to his red and gold striped fighter. A white armor clad trooper trotted into the
hangar, but was immediately picked off from distance by Bryant's sharpshooting. Aray
>dropped down into the X-wing and Trent climbed the small utility ladder into the fighters
cockpit. Bryant reached back behind his seat, grabbed the helmet that was resting there
>and fastened it to his head. He realized then that he was still wearing what he slept in, but
at this point, he really didn't care. As he prepped the fighter and ran through the pre-flight
>he looked back at the doorway to the rest of the base. A crimson glow was penetrating
through the darkness, sparks were dancing in the air and smoke clouded everything else.
> "Bryant," Trent started somberly over the two-way comm-system in his X-wing.
"They're not going to make it, are they?" he meekly asked. Bryant's fighter started to pull
>off out of the hanger as the anti-grav generators kicked in a lifted it off the ground.
 "Shut up Trent, don't even think that." He scolded like a parent chastising a child.
>Trent was silent as he steered his ship out of the hangar and into the sky.
 "They're going to die, aren't they?" he finally asked.

> "Shut up Trent. I'm serious, we've got more important things to worry about." The
accent of the sentence was on 'up'. There was another silent pause before the comm
>crackled to life again.
 "Bryant man, they're dying down there..."

> "Trent... you see those 3 star destroyers out there?" another pause. " You see em? The
ones we're currently flying towards? The ones who, as we speak, are targetting us with
>about a billion streaks of green death? See? If we don't get our heads together, we'll be
dying up here... you got that?" Trent sighed. "GOT IT?" Bryant was finished scolding.

> "Yeah man, I got it." Trent conceded.
 "Alright. We'll drink to em later. For now, get yourself strapped down and lock yer
>foils, we're gonna hafta strafe this thing and go if we want out of here alive."
 "As ordered, Halo I." Trent squacked, now suddenly sounding milliteristic.

> "Thazzzz my boy. Alright Halo II, I'll go high, you go low, rendezvous on the other
side and we're off to..." Bryants mind blanked. That was not a first, but in a combat
>situation, it was never a good thing "Gods man, where we off to?" Trent's droid beeped
something to him.

> "No time to worry, just make a quick jump to the outskirts of the system, we'll go
from there."

> "Agreed II, enjoy the ride." And with that, Bryant switched the comm-system to a
general imperial frequency. "Attention Imperials,

this is Lieutenant Command Bryant
>Stanson of the Alliance Starfleet. Is there any way we can resolve
this little dealy here
quick, Im kinda in a hurry here." His words
were beamed out across space and broadcast
>into the bridge of the star destroyers. The wedge shaped ships grew
larger in his window
as he calmly awaited a response. One came
crackling into the cockpit.
> "Rebel fighter, this is Captain Jender of the ISS Regality. You are
a member of an
organization that is in direct violation of the
jurisdiction of the Galactic Empire and are
>therefore subject for immediate arrest. Power down and prepare to be
taken aboard."
Bryant just laughed aloud as he opened a
communications channel.
> "Jender! Greetings and hallucinations." His sense of humor was
wasted on the
Imperial. At any rate, he prattled on in his
preamble. "Uhhhh... yeah.... you do of course
>realise that all that jargon and legal spew you just rambled off at
me doesnt come near to
meaning next to nothing about spit to me,
correct?" He paused for added affect.
>"Obviously I don't plan on surrendering... this thing is armed you
know." Again, he
paused. "Yeah, whatever, we're just gonna push ya
around a little and then be on our
>merry way. You imps have yourself a pleasant day, alright?"

Trent's fighter was slightly to the right of Bryants, and a few
meters below. The twos
>speeds were matched and they were flying in tandem. Stabilizers
deployed in attack
position, both men mentally prepared themselves
for the run. Green turbolaser bolts came
>seering towards them, and the X-Wings began to dance. As they
approached to about 3
kilometers, the first volley of concussion
missiles was unleashed and was sent smashing
>into the Vics shielding. Bryant went high, arching over the
destroyers superstructure
while in a sort of rebel version of the
Tallon roll, and Trent went low while constantly
>dipping his craft in and out along a U shape, nearly rubbing up
against the ships belly.
Neither ships took a hit from the defense
guns, though both came close. With the first
>destroyer behind them, the two regrouped, dumped laser power to zero
to boost the
reserves and optimized their crafts shielding for a
quick strafe of the capital.
> "II, pull up a wire frame of that wedge, I wanna see something."
Bryant ordered,
tinkering with his own screen much like a child
would tinker with a new toy. The fighter
>lurched as it was hit from behind. The incoming two capitals had yet
to open fire on then,
and in a moment, Bryant realised why. From
the first STD came 3 squadrons of TIE/ln's,
>from the second, 2 squadrons of TIEln's and a squadron of TIE/rc's
and as he looked over
>his shoulder, Bryant saw a squadron of TIEad's. This was not a good
thing. Not a good
>thing by a long long ways.
 "Aight Bryant, I've got the schems...
if you were asking bout the SG gap sploit, then
>you're right on, a few well placed torps should rip apart the back
end of the super
structure..." Sploits were ways rebels took
advantage of typical flaws found in Imperial
>technology and tactics. When you construct a capital star ship as
big as a small city, there
are bound to be flaws... either in
structural integrity, electrical wiring, some times even a
>poorly placed window could be used to the rebels advantage. A fatal
flaw of the
Victory-class Star Destroyers was their bridge

shielding housed atop the massive ships
>superstructure. The generators were placed in such a way that their
circular shielding
radius overlapped directly in the middle,
causing a sort of electromagnetic disturbance
>and essentially rendering a 4 square meter area more or less
defenceless. Finding the flaw
was the easy part. Placing a torpedo
was slightly more difficult, and there were more
>pressing concerns at this moment. Concerns such as how to deal with
a wing of imperial
fighters.
> "Thanks Trent, but we've suddenly got issues..." muttered Bryant
through the
comm-system of his T-65. Muffled profanity from the
other side of the channel told
>Bryant that Trent more or less understood.
 "We're dead, aren't
we Bryant?" Bryant wanted to scream. Half of his mouth did, and
>it came out all flavors of muffled on Trent's end.
 "Bryant?"
started Trent on a question.
> "Trent my boy, just strap yourself in, make sure yer foils are
locked and drop any
shields you've got going, dump it to engines
and cannons and prepare to go in hot like
>you're making love to an angel." Another question was started by
Trent, so Bryant cut it
off. "Check yer HUD, those squints and
dupes are rigged with ion cannons. They want us
>alive, so at this point it really doesn't matter wheter or not we've
got our shields up. If we
can out fly them, out run them and out
gun them, we can live. I don't see any Interdictors,
>so don't get sucked into a fire fight, okay?" Bryant could hear
Trent's smile.
 "We could take em." Trent remarked. Bryant smiled
too. He legitimatly raced the idea
>around in his head, but finally decided to be rational. A startling
decision, for sure.
 "Trent man, let's just get out of here. I've
got a girlfriend waiting back with the fleet
>and I'd hate to keep her waiting." The three others, Trent and the
two droids, all chimed
in with a question at once, to which Bryant
simply grinned.
> "She's there... she just doesn't know she's mine yet." he assured.
The first streaks of
blue ion fire whizzed by Bryant's cockpit,
which meant fun time was over. Well, they
>would still be having fun, but this was different. This was
buisness. When your an
X-Wing jockey though, you're allowed to mix
buisness with pleasure. Bryant gritted his
>teeth and kicked the stick forward, sending the craft into a dive.
Two TIEs followed
directly, several more indirectly, and more
still simply swarmed, waiting to get their
>chance. They would soon have it.
 Trent's approach to the
situation was a simple head on scatter run. With engines at
>150% he broke a line of squints that had been forming, and one of
his wild, unaimed pot
shots caught one's solar panel and sent it
careening out into the blackness of space. No
>specacular explosion, but no ejection either, which meant the pilot
had probably died.
Life support failure was common among TIE
pilots, and dupes were more or less one
>shot kills. Some appreciated the imperial pilots non-reliance on
shielding, but ask any
TIE pilot who took a hit and lived to tell
of it and you'll get a different story entirely.
> Obviously, the order to open fire came, and soon the spacescape was
filled with blue
ion flares and yellow laser fire. Bryant could
feel small spurts of pure energy catching his
>minimal shielding, and he watched the dial along the left side of
his HUD change from
bright green to deep yellow in a matter of
seconds. Not good. Not good at all. He

>rethunked his strategy and opted to put more effort in evasion than he previously had.
Apparently Trent had the same problem.

> "Rebel fighters..." came a voice over both men's comm-systems. It sounded as though
they were being mocked. Quite possibly they were. "You understand that we have you

>out numbered and out gunned. If you power down immediately we promise mercy. If not...
well then, perhaps you will find out if the Imperial interrogation stories you've surely

>heard do us justice. Bryant felt Trent's eyes on him. He decided to answer the ultimatum
not with words, but in action. Three TIEs fell to Bryant's shots and he grinned in a way

>only he could. His spirits were short lived though, as he was swarmed once again by an
N number of imperial fighters.

> "Gods be damned.." he muttered to himself, before calling out to Trent. "II," he
started, choosing to use the others squadron designation. Bryant and Trent were both part

>of the defunct Forn Squadron, who were scrapped after the battle at Yavin. It's remaining
members were either reassigned to various other rebel units or, in Bryant and Trent's case,

>given various oddjobs. Though the two were arguably among the best fighters in the
squadron, their lack of discipline and careless ways often paved a path straight into blue

>collar, menial jobs, and often too, on suicide missions. But in the six months since Forn's
passing, the two had managed to fend quite well for themselves, recognition or not. Now,

>Bryant and Trent called themselves Halos, simply because it was possible that they had
already been killed and lived in this universe simply as angels. It would take a fleet of

>hands to count how many times the two of them should have been killed off. Bryant was
Halo Lead based only on the fact that he was older than Trent, but they were equal in

>each others eyes. Nearly brothers, really, growing up in the same slums of the same clave
in the same district of the same imperial subjugated planet in the same universe. The only

>thing that ran deeper than the blood they seemed to share was the booze they drank
together. And now, Bryant was calling on his surrogate brother.

> "Here lead..." came Trent's voice, though with significantly more static this time.
Bryant managed to catch a glimpse of Trent's fighter, being hounded by a pair of squints,

>ion cannons raging in the blackness. Bryant was snapped from his site seeing by the
rocking of his ship, as the last of his shields were ripped away. "... though I don't know for

>how much longer..." finished Trent's scratchy voice. Bryant's face was grimmer now than
he cared to admit.

> "Form up on my left wing bud. I'm done toying. Let's go home." he came. He was
quite obvious serious, and Trent knew more than to question Bryant when he got like this.

>The boy had a built in survival instinct that very few seemed to appreciate. Trent hated to
say it, but he knew it was true.

> "Easier said than done, my fine feathered friend." were the words that rang in Bryant's
ears. Even Aray and Arthree moaned at this. But the boy wasn't going to give up quite

>yet. A slap of the stick yanked the X-Wing down and right, and putting his entire weight
into it, Bryant forced the craft into a tight barrel roll and a deep upper arch, shaking any

>pursuing craft. A starboard thrust straightened him out right behind Trent and with a few
snap shots he picked off the squints trailing II.

> "It's just that easy man." laughed Bryant. He got moody in combat

situations. No one quite knew why, but it seemed to give him an edge, so no one questioned him on it. A quick shunt of power to engines and Bryant was held under Trent's wing, like a motherbird guiding her son home. Trent still had minimal shielding, so the analogy held. Together, they picked off a few more imperial fighters, but things looked bleak for the two when two more squadrons were launched. Bryant also saw the Y shaped outlines of imperial shuttles descending onto the planet in a steady pace now. The invasion was more or less over, and now the two of them were just an annoyance. Like flies buzzing around a long dead body. "In some ways, that's flattering..." Trent observed, gesturing out to the flight after flight of fighters pouring out to greet the two pilots. Bryant tried to smile, he really did. The final blow to his spirits came in a blaze of blue energy, as a ball of ion energy exploded in the aft of his craft, and with a scream of profanity he watched the lines of lightning trace the inside console of his ship, shutting down system after system by overloading the power relays. He quick tried to pull up some information, but to no avail. No unconventional rebel trick would work this time, so he tried a conventional one. > "Array, are you there?" he barked into the ships astromech translator. Only fuzz. Even the droid was gone by now, and all he could do was sit and pray or sit and curse. He chose the latter of his option, filling the void with a choice of illicit words in several dozen languages and dialects. His momentum carried the Xwing on for a bit and a few smaller ion blasts made sure that there would be no second chances. Soon, his motion was halted by the grip of a tractor beam, and that adventure was over. He had the sinking feeling that a new adventure was just beginning, and he was more or less right. By pressing his face to the blast shielding in his cockpit, he saw that Trent's ship had suffered the same fate. Today was not looking good. Tomorrow wasn't looking all that bright either. And all he could do was sigh as he was pulled closer and closer to the opening in the bottom of the Victory-II's hull. This was going to make an interesting story for Bryant's grand kids some day. > All around him fighters were either doing a victory dance or nursing rebel inflicted wounds (a surprisingly large amount of those). In the back of his mind, he had known from the start this was a fight he couldn't win, but that had never stopped him before, and he certainly wouldn't have let it stop him today. And life had a weird way of working out for him anyways. Intuition was never wrong. Truly, how many stories had he heard that started 'Well, I didn't do what my gut instinct told me and I...' In all likelihood he'd be home before the rebellion missed him. Not that would ever REALLY miss him, but it was a warming thought at least. > Trent was merely muttering strings of incoherence all the while. Bryant just started laughing. > Array bleeped something to Bryant. Something of schematics or... something... it didn't matter really. Choosing to see the silver lining on his gray cloud, Bryant pulled out a mini-disc of an old Correllain thrasher band from the cargo pocket of his flight suit and tinkered with the EQs and the gains, pulled the decorated helmet off his head and set it in his lap, then reclined in his seat and stared off into space, trying to find his star. It was just another one of those days.

End
file.